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## National Emblems



THE first Western sovereign to adopt a flag was Clovis, King of the Franks. After his conversion to Christianity in the fifth century he took the "chape de Saint Martin" as his standard. This, according to some writers, was actually part of the cloak which the saintly Bishop of Tours cut in two in order to share it with a beggar at Amiens. More credible authorities, however, assert that it was the blue flag of Saint Martin's abbey.

After Clovis, the Merovingian Kings seem to have returned to the ancient emblems. They were content to fight under eagles, flowers, crosses, or the images of saints until the time of Charlemagne, who, if an old mosaic in the church of Saint John Lateran at Rome is to be believed, reintroduced the blue flag embellished with six red roses.

The color of the French flag was changed in 1124, when Louis the Fat carried the red oriflamme of Saint Denis in his struggles against the German Emperor Henry V. This continued to be the official French flag down to the battle of Agincourt in 1415. In the meantime the blue flag had again made its appearance, now decorated with the fleur-de-lis instead of the roses of Charlemagne. In this form it was carried at Acre and Crécy and Poitiers, until in the fifteenth century it became the banner of France.

### France's White Flag

THE first white flag in French history was the banner of the Virgin Mary, borne by Joan of Arc in her heroic campaigns for the defense of the Dauphin. A pure white flag was occasionally used by Francis I. in his struggles against the Emperor Charles V., but it did not become the permanent royal banner until Henry IV., the first Bourbon, ascended the throne in 1589.

The tricolor of the French Revolution was a compromise. The cockades of the revolutionists were composed of two colors, the red of the Paris commune and the blue of the ancient monarchy. In the troubled times just preceding the deposition and execution of Louis XVI., Lafayette, to signify the desire of the people for a reconciliation with their King, added the Bourbon white to the cockade. The tricolor as a national emblem was adopted by the convention in 1794.

Long before this, however, the tricolor had been the national flag of Holland. The Dutch were in fact the first to use it. When the United Provinces gained their independence from Spain in the sixteenth century, according to a favorite old story which cannot be authenticated, they invited Henry of Navarre to choose their colors, and he suggested orange, blue, and white. Whether he selected this combination or not, such were the colors of Holland until sometime in the seventeenth century, when the orange was replaced by red. When William of Orange became King of England in 1698, he crossed the Channel under the red, white, and blue.

### The English Banner

THE early inhabitants of England, like those of other countries, used emblematic devices of one kind or another, that of the Saxons being a white horse. The introduction of flags into England is ascribed to the missionary Saint Augustine and his followers, who, after the conversion of King Ethelbert, according to the venerable Bede, entered Canterbury in procession, chanting and bearing small banners.

Since the fourteenth century the cross of Saint George has been the emblem of the British nation. Before that time it was worn on the armor by the crusaders, among whom it came to be known as the "jack." During the bloody civil wars of the fifteenth century it was practically superseded by the roses, white and red, and in 1606, by proclamation of James I., it was finally replaced by a red flag with the jack in the upper inside corner. The red standard of Great Britain did not attain its present form, however, until after the union with Ireland in 1800. By parliamentary enactment in 1801, the present Union Jack was brought into being by the addition of the cross of Saint Patrick.

### First Waving Flags

WAVING flags are said to have been first brought to Spain by the Saracens. The present Spanish colors, red and yellow, came from the old shields of Castile and Aragon.

The Austrian black and yellow were the colors of the Holy Roman Empire. They were adopted, so the story goes, by Frederick Barbarossa, whose fancy was captured at a ceremony in Mainz by the black and gold flooring of the hall.

The crescent was originally the special mark of Constantinople, where for centuries it was used as a Christian symbol. There it was that the Turks first found it when they captured the city in 1453. Even to-day it may be found side by side with the cross on the churches in Moscow and other Russian cities, where it is used to indicate the Byzantine origin of the Russian faith.



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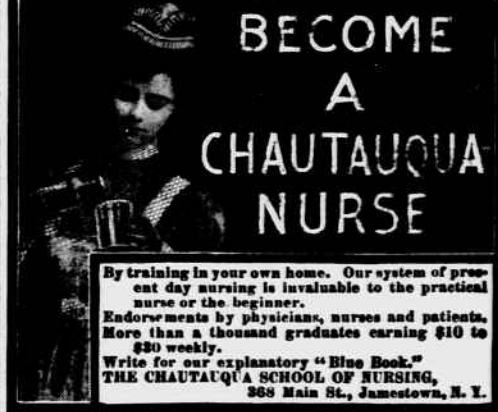
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